

THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY

pro bono humani generis

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Dear Walter

I was pleased to see the reports on anticipatory precautions for the "post-polio" era. If I could expect universal compliance and Nature's cooperation I'd be even more reassured. (I've not yet seen the current B-WHO).

At minimum it's time to start moving to drafting and negotiating formal treaty agreements that would make it a crime under international law to preserve unregistered polio, and an undertaking that code in domestic law of each country. I do not believe we are anywhere close to that in regulations adopted by WHO. With all the public fuss we've seen about smallpox, I am sure it will be an irresistible temptation for some rogues to keep some polio in their freezers, for purposes who knows what.

Epidemic Polio itself evolved (into at least 4 strains) within the human species; what can we say of the odds of re-evolution? What is known of DNA homologies and immunological cross-reactions of polio strains with other picornaviruses? Has there been any systematic search for these (not necessarily associated with frank disease) in other fauna?

Yours

Josh

